

is very important to track the efficiencies—and, three, make government center data energy usage statistics public in a way that empowers further innovation.

Importantly, the bill requires government agencies to formulate specific performance goals and a means to calculate overall cost savings from implementation.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I first introduced the legislation in 2013. It has passed the House by wide margins in each of the last two Congresses. It is noncontroversial. It is bipartisan. It makes sense. I want to urge all of my colleagues to support the bill.

I thank my colleagues on a bipartisan basis at the Energy and Commerce Committee, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague in trying to spice things up, so I reserve the balance of my allotted time.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY), my valued colleague on the committee.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 306, the Energy Efficient Government Technology Act, sponsored by the committee. It is also bipartisan, as my colleague from California mentioned, sponsored by Ms. ESHOO and Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.

H.R. 306 promotes the use of energy efficiency and energy savings information technologies and practices across the Federal Government, especially in data centers.

The bill amends the Energy Independence Act of 2007 to require Federal agencies to coordinate with the OMB, DOE, and EPA in developing an implementation strategy for the maintenance, purchase, and use of energy efficiency and energy savings information technology.

Ten percent of Federal electricity is consumed by Federal energy centers. H.R. 306 aims to keep that at 10 percent or even to reduce it.

The legislation also sets out specific items for consideration in developing an implementation strategy that requires the establishment of performance goals for evaluating agencies' efforts. In addition, the bill would amend the 2007 act to require the DOE and EPA to collaborate with stakeholders in the implementation of data centers, efficiency programs, and other measures to improve data center energy efficiency.

Again, the legislation was passed by the House without dissent last year as stand-alone legislation. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I commend my colleagues Ms. ESHOO and Mr. KINZINGER.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a naval aviator, a Senate staffer, and a Member of Congress. In those 20 years, the best

leaders I have seen are ones who lead by example. H.R. 306 makes sure D.C. leads by example. If we lead, the whole country will follow.

I urge my colleagues to vote "aye" on H.R. 306.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 306.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SMALL BUSINESS BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 288) to ensure that small business providers of broadband Internet access service can devote resources to broadband deployment rather than compliance with cumbersome regulatory requirements.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 288

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Small Business Broadband Deployment Act".

SEC. 2. EXCEPTION TO ENHANCEMENT TO TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The enhancements to the transparency rule of the Federal Communications Commission under section 8.3 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, as described in paragraphs 162 through 184 of the Report and Order on Remand, Declaratory Ruling, and Order of the Federal Communications Commission with regard to protecting and promoting the open Internet (adopted February 26, 2015) (FCC 15-24), shall not apply to any small business.

(b) SUNSET.—Subsection (a) shall not have any force or effect after the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) REPORT BY FCC.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Federal Communications Commission shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that contains the recommendations of the Commission (and data supporting such recommendations) regarding—

(1) whether the exception provided by subsection (a) should be made permanent; and

(2) whether the definition of the term "small business" for purposes of such exception should be modified from the definition in subsection (d)(2).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.—The term "broadband Internet access service" has the meaning given such term in section 8.2 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations.

(2) SMALL BUSINESS.—The term "small business" means any provider of broadband

Internet access service that has not more than 250,000 subscribers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

□ 1530

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 288, the Small Business Broadband Deployment Act. I am glad that the House is taking swift action on this bill, which would protect small Internet service providers from the enhanced disclosure requirements laid out in the 2015 Open Internet Order.

After adopting the Open Internet Order, the FCC recognized the importance of exempting small ISPs from these enhanced transparency rules and subsequently granted a temporary exemption to broadband providers with fewer than 100,000 subscribers. However, the Commission failed to reach an agreement to grant another exemption before the deadline last December and, as a result, has left hundreds of our Nation's small providers vulnerable to cumbersome rules.

FCC Commissioners Pai and O'Rielly have taken action, since the exemption expired, to reassure our small broadband providers that the rules will not be enforced until the situation has been addressed by the Commission, but Congress should go a step further and provide certainty to our Nation's small businesses and pass this bill.

Rather than a 1-year exemption to the enhanced disclosure requirements, this bill would exempt for 5 years broadband providers with fewer than 250,000 subscribers from the enhanced reporting obligations, providing them with the regulatory certainty to invest in their business.

At our hearing last January, we heard from multiple witnesses just how cumbersome and burdensome these rules are. One witness described the difference to be as significant as the need to hire regulatory counsel versus the ability to build another tower to provide service. For a small business in a capital-intensive industry, that could be the difference between getting more people connected to the Internet and going out of business.

We cannot let our small businesses and hardworking taxpayers be saddled

with more onerous rules and the costs that they bring. In addition to regulatory relief for small ISPs, the bill adds certainty for our Nation's small ISPs by extending the exemption for 5 years.

It was disappointing to see the Commission fail to reach an agreement at the end of last year to extend the exemption, and it is why we are here today. Despite overwhelming bipartisan support from Congress and President Obama's Small Business Administration, negotiations fell short, and our Nation's smallest and most competitive Internet service providers were left to bear the burden.

In today's 21st century economy, we need to do more to encourage connectivity, and this bill embodies that spirit. Congress is poised to provide the regulatory certainty small businesses are seeking in order to invest in stronger networks and foster a better consumer experience.

I want to thank Chairman WALDEN and Mr. LOEBSACK for acting quickly to reintroduce this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to support the commonsense measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I want to congratulate the gentleman from Oregon on his new chairmanship. I look forward to working across the aisle on most of the issues. It is a good bipartisan subcommittee. I think we have a lot to accomplish.

The Small Business Broadband Deployment Act, H.R. 288, unanimously passed the House last Congress on a bipartisan vote, unanimous. H.R. 288 provides a 5-year exemption from the FCC's enhanced transparency rules for small Internet service providers that serve 250,000 or fewer subscribers.

This exemption comes with the understanding that there is a 5-year sunset on the exemption and that the FCC report to Congress with sufficient information to help us better understand the impacts on the consumers of a permanent exemption, of a possible permanent exemption. This data will also better inform us whether a longer term exemption is necessary and whether we got the definition of what a small business is right in this case.

It is also worth noting that H.R. 288 would leave intact the FCC's 2010 transparency rules that consumers have come to rely on, such as what they are paying for, Internet speeds they rely on, data quality, and so on. At the same time, these modifications provide certainty for small ISPs while the FCC collects and reports relevant information to Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), the chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the author of this legislation.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the new subcommittee chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology. I know our country is in good hands and our committee is as well with Mrs. BLACKBURN chairing that important subcommittee. I want to thank my colleague from California for his kind comments and his work over the years on these issues. I concur with him that we have a wonderful opportunity to continue our bipartisan work as the committee has been known for, for a long time. Clearly, from time to time, we will have our differences, and we know that as well. It is part of democracy. There is so much of this work, like this bill, that is so very important.

As we begin the 115th Congress, I am pleased to be here to support this bipartisan bill because I think it reflects the best of what government can do for those who sent us here. Small Business Broadband Deployment Act seeks to alleviate, as you have heard, Mr. Speaker, these unnecessary regulatory burdens on small Internet service providers—these are the small ones, oftentimes in our rural communities but not always—while still ensuring that consumers are protected. We found the right balance here.

By extending an exemption to the Federal Communications Commission's enhanced reporting rules, this bill allows these small businesses to focus on their core mission, and that is to provide broadband Internet access to customers throughout America. Over the past year, we spent a great deal of time focused on this issue. We first raised concerns with the Federal Communications Commission in a letter, Mr. Speaker, from the committee, as well as from the Committee on Small Business. We urged the chairman, Tom Wheeler, to not only make the exemption permanent but also to raise the threshold by defining a small business to bring it in line with the definitions previously blessed by the Obama administration's Small Business Administration. We were trying to find some consistency, some workability, and some common sense here.

Well, unfortunately, the FCC only extended the exemption for 1 year, despite the overwhelming support to do this permanent extension. It was clear Congress needed to act. That is what we are doing here. I introduced a discussion draft last year that would have permanently extended the exemption and increased the threshold by defining a small business.

At our January 2016 legislative hearing on the bill, we heard from a small Internet service provider who shared the dilemma that many small ISPs face in these circumstances: Should they put up new equipment, or should they hire a lawyer to help with compliance? Should they improve service for customers, or should they devote those financial resources to sifting through regulatory language and drafting extensive reports on packet loss?

So often these small ISPs provide service to areas of the country that are rural, like in my district throughout eastern Oregon or Representative LOEBSACK's district in Iowa—we heard from him—or may not be as easy to serve and, in some cases, provide a vital competitive edge to larger Internet service providers. We should be making all efforts to promote the viability of these businesses, not saddle them with additional requirements that make it more difficult to do what they are in business to do.

Representative LOEBSACK and I were able to come to a compromise through extensive negotiation. In the bill we have before us today, we extend this exemption for 5 years. Now, it gives greater regulatory certainty to these small Internet service providers looking for predictability when making investment decisions. In addition, we increased the threshold for defining a small business and required the FCC to report back to Congress on the exemption along with data around small ISPs that is currently lacking.

In the end, this bill presents a good compromise that will relieve burdens for small businesses while leaving in place protections for consumers. So it is important to note this bill doesn't affect the transparency rules, as my colleagues have mentioned, adopted in the FCC's 2010 rules. Consumers will continue to have access to those disclosures they have come to expect, with the information needed to make informed decisions about their Internet service.

Again, this bill passed the House unanimously last year, 411-0. Unfortunately, while it made it through the Senate Commerce Committee, it never quite came up for a vote in the Senate. In addition, the exemption granted by the FCC expired on December 15, 2016, and has not yet been renewed. Now, that leaves these many small businesses exposed to the serious reporting burden that we have heard about throughout this process, as well as a great deal of uncertainty around what the future may hold for them. It is now more important than ever that we act to quickly fill this gap and protect these businesses and the consumers they serve.

I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, especially Representative LOEBSACK, for working with us on this bill. This bipartisan process has resulted in a strong piece of legislation that I am confident will protect many and promote continued network investment and build-out by small businesses. This legislation represents a commonsense approach to a problem that directly impacts so many of our constituents. This solution will enable our country to continue its leadership in broadband deployment. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank the chairman for his work on this and for his willingness to

compromise. As he pointed out, it was a process. It took both sides. I think he wanted permanent exemption, we wanted a less exemption, and it worked out. I think it is the right compromise. Five years gives businesses the predictability they need. It is a good place to be. In 5 years, we will see the report and whether it makes sense to continue the exemption or not.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague from Tennessee on assuming the chairmanship of the subcommittee. I look forward to our working together.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), a new member of our committee, the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support of H.R. 288, the Small Business Broadband Deployment Act. In 2015, the FCC adopted burdensome transparency requirements for Internet service providers. The FCC immediately recognized that these new transparency requirements would be particularly burdensome for small Internet service providers, so they provided a temporary exemption for providers with 100,000 or fewer subscribers. Despite overwhelming support to make the exemption permanent, the Commission extended the current exemption for just an additional year.

The bill eases the burdens created by the FCC rule by extending the exemption to Internet service providers who have 250,000 subscribers or less and extends the exemption for 5 years.

This is commonsense legislation. This bill provides relief and certainty to Internet service providers so they can continue to build networks, deploy broadband, improve connectivity for rural consumers, and create jobs.

I commend Chairman WALDEN for championing this legislation so that we can continue to grow our infrastructure and improve connectivity for rural Americans.

Mr. McNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 288, the Small Business Broadband Deployment Act. This commonsense, bipartisan legislation does two important things. First, it extends the temporary exemption granted to small businesses by the Federal Communications Commission, the FCC, from the burdensome disclosure requirements for Internet service providers and the FCC's own Open Internet Order by 5 years. Second, it increases the number of small businesses that can utilize the exemption by raising the threshold from 100,000 subscribers to the much more realistic 250,000 subscribers.

Small businesses frequently feel that the Federal Government exercises its

most creativity in looking for new ways to get in their way. Oftentimes, small Internet providers are the only ones willing to take the risk and deploy broadband to particularly hard-to-reach areas of rural America. The last thing they have time for is the FCC imposing a greater regulatory burden on them, diverting precious resources to make Washington bureaucrats busy instead of doing what they do best, providing high quality broadband services to millions of Americans in every corner of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and help reduce a portion of the tedious regulatory burden on small businesses.

□ 1545

Mr. McNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to say that the bill passed unanimously in the last Congress. It is bipartisan. It gives small ISP providers a certain amount of time and it allows the FCC to decide if it is overburdensome or not, to require them to disclose information to their customers. This allows us to give customers the amount of protection that is due them as well.

So it is a good compromise. I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

I thank my colleagues for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I will just encourage my colleagues to join us in passing H.R. 288.

As my colleague from California said, this is one of those commonsense measures. When you talk about removing the burden of regulatory overreach from our Nation's small business, and in this case, our small Internet service providers, this is something that will help get that job done. It is also something that will help extend Internet service to more Americans, and that is a goal that we all share.

So at this time, in closing, I encourage passage of H.R. 288.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 288.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

INSPIRING THE NEXT SPACE PIONEERS, INNOVATORS, RESEARCHERS, AND EXPLORERS (INSPIRE) WOMEN ACT

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 321) to inspire women to enter the aerospace field, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, through mentorship and outreach.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 321

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Inspiring the Next Space Pioneers, Innovators, Researchers, and Explorers (INSPIRE) Women Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) NASA GIRLS and NASA BOYS are virtual mentoring programs using commercially available video chat programs to pair National Aeronautics and Space Administration mentors with young students anywhere in the country. NASA GIRLS and NASA BOYS give young students the opportunity to interact and learn from real engineers, scientists, and technologists.

(2) The Aspire to Inspire (A2I) program engages young girls to present science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) career opportunities through the real lives and jobs of early career women at NASA.

(3) The Summer Institute in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Research (SISTER) program at the Goddard Space Flight Center is designed to increase awareness of, and provide an opportunity for, female middle school students to be exposed to and explore nontraditional career fields with Goddard Space Flight Center women engineers, mathematicians, scientists, technicians, and researchers.

SEC. 3. SUPPORTING WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE FIELDS OF AEROSPACE AND SPACE EXPLORATION.

The Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shall encourage women and girls to study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, pursue careers in aerospace, and further advance the Nation's space science and exploration efforts through support of the following initiatives:

(1) NASA GIRLS and NASA BOYS.

(2) Aspire to Inspire.

(3) Summer Institute in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Research.

SEC. 4. PLAN.

Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a plan for how NASA can best facilitate and support both current and retired astronauts, scientists, engineers, and innovators, including early career female astronauts, scientists, engineers, and innovators, to engage with K-12 female STEM students and inspire the next generation of women to consider participating in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and to pursue careers in aerospace. This plan shall—

(1) report on existing activities with current and retired NASA astronauts, scientists, engineers, and innovators;

(2) identify how NASA could best leverage existing authorities to facilitate and support current and retired astronaut, scientist, engineer, and innovator participation in NASA outreach efforts;

(3) propose and describe a program specific to retired astronauts, scientists, engineers, and innovators; and

(4) identify any additional authorities necessary to institute such a program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from